



## 20 Things You Can Do When Your Government Is Broken

**TLDR:** DIY printable zine that offers directions and steps to take to build a resilient community focused on resistance and mutual support. *(with many thanks to the original writers)*

1. Focus on your one-on-one relationships
2. Make soup for people

- 3. Build a support network**
- 4. Buy, gather, or otherwise obtain Plan B and other contraceptives**
- 5. Write letters to people in prison and detention**
- 6. Make art and display it in public**
- 7. Take concrete steps to build relationships beyond borders**
- 8. Learn new skills, share them, and help others learn new skills**
- 9. Feel your emotions**
- 10. Learn about and begin to practice alternative ways to make group plans and decisions**
- 11. Gather and distribute free N95/KN95 masks and COVID tests**
- 12. Start a study group and find inspiration in those stories**
- 13. If you care for a child or children create a mutual aid group**
- 14. Revive the mutual aid funds/networks that used to keep immigrant neighbors afloat**

**15. Take time to mourn your losses and grieve your dead**

**16. Feed people for free**

**17. If a friend or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts offer to drop everything and be present with them**

**18. Organize a stoop or porch sale**

**19. Engage in play with others as a gateway to imagining other worlds**

**20. Slow down**

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As fascist and authoritarian forces take the reins of US power and impact the continent and the globe, it should be clear at this point that appealing to the government —any government —is a losing strategy.

We offer up this sampler of ideas, encouraging you to think and act for yourselves, and with each other, because such individual and collective actions are the only winning strategy. If each idea here seems not enough on its own—well, it isn't. But don't let that slow you down.

Each action moves us all closer to the goal of a better community.

So many forms of dictatorships —empires, monarchies, and states—have risen and fallen across history. We are not alone in our need to wrestle with authority that is abused and misused.

Ancestors throughout human history—people of all colors, genders, and cultures of this earth—have struggled together to resist laws that when enforced harm those they are expected to serve and protect. People have independently organized, defended, and practiced many forms of mutual aid, collective care, and self-governance for millennia. They haven't put off the worlds they want to see but instead have directly acted as if they were already free.

We must rely on connections beyond all borders. Lean on the community of others to live lives worth living, whether we are mourning or celebrating, or grappling time and again with what freedom should and could look like.

May all freedom-seeking peoples journey side by side toward those goals by better loving and caring for each other.

Here are 20 things you can do to counter fascism and authoritarianism —yes, you! yes, now! Dream up and put into motion many, many more things too. This is only a beginning.

**1. Focus on your one-on-one relationships.**

Check in with each of your loved ones, let them know how you are doing and ask them about their needs and wants. Together, talk about the world you want to build. Identify the steps that you need to take together – in words, or actions to create that world in your backyard.

**2. Make soup for people and** do not stop inviting them over for soup! Be a reason for living.

**3. Build a support network.** Join with like-minded people and organize. Focus on smaller groups over larger groups; a few devoted friends can go further than a large and detached group. Your support network, the love of your friends and family, can always be broader; build it bigger, with care and intentionality. Try out new activities: talk to people and ask how they're feeling, distribute literature, organize a study

group, or put up stickers or plant and tend public spaces together. With every loving bond we forge, we distance ourselves a little more from the demons that haunt us — hopelessness, irony, and complacency — and find sparks of possibility. Try, fail, and try again and again.

**4. Buy, gather, or otherwise obtain Plan B,** and save it for yourself and others in case it's needed later. Set up a Plan B distribution network in your community. Do the same with other, potentially soon-hard-to-access supplies related to bodily freedom, like birth control or hormone therapy for transgender people or hormone replacement therapy for menopausal women.

**5. Write letters to people in prison and detention,** send them books, and/or do jail support and solidarity for those facing state repression in your communities. Act in ways that reduce police and official involvement when you respond to conflict and harm. Do this also in your day-to-day relations with others. Remember, there are no prisons or cops in eternity

**6. Make art and display it in public.** Draw, paint, or write a colorful sign about your dreams, your hopes for a better world, or to celebrate

something that you love about this one. It doesn't matter if you don't think of yourself as an artsy type. If you can, get together with others to do this; share art materials, space, and ideas. Wheat paste (or wallpaper paste or glue) your finished work in public—somewhere you and others will see it when going about your daily lives. You've now made a material change to your surroundings. It will make people smile. It will make people feel less alone. It will make visible your resistance as well as visions. It also won't last forever. Nothing does. You can always make more.

**7. Take concrete steps to build relationships beyond borders and strengthen global connections** with those who share your values. Here are a few starting points. Learn a new language and schedule mutual practice sessions with others studying your language; such skills will likely also prove useful to aid those at increased threat of being targeted. Reach out to other people (or collectives, projects, etc.) in other parts of the world who you share affinity with—Jews and Muslims, dispossessed and displaced people, political or climate change activists, queers, and so on—and see if there's anything you can collaborate on. Seek out the

stories of people who fought or fled authoritarian regimes in the past and present; learn from their experiences, and engage in discussions about our current challenges and a diversity of tactics to address them.

**8. Learn new skills, share them, and help others learn new skills** toward everything we need and desire — everything for everyone, and what's more for free. Learn to be a medic, facilitator, birth coach, electrician, filmmaker, mediator, writer, researcher to dig up information for your local group, and on and on. Learn how to stop bleeds, plant gardens, squat and/or build houses, purify water, craft zines, sew clothing, repair cars, use a chain saw, make composting toilets, or cook for crowds. Learn how to aid folks in finding refuge, calming their nervous systems, setting up digital security, getting hormones and birth control, and so much more.

**9. Feel your emotions.** Do not suppress them. Feel them and remember that this connects us to everyone through history who has ever despaired. Feel them with others. Set up peer support networks, a weekend-long emotional care clinic or daylong emotional aid skills share, or something as simple as social spaces where



you can find others, sip herbal tea, and reciprocally warm each others' hearts, even if temporarily.

**10. Learn about and begin to practice alternative ways to make plans and come to decisions** as a group. Look for methods of organizing that have worked for other groups who got shit done in the past.

**11. Gather and distribute free N95/KN95 masks and COVID tests** as a baseline toward building a more generalized harm reduction crew that can gather and distribute, for example, Naloxone, fentanyl test strips, clean needles, condoms, and lube. Normalize COVID, other health protections, and additional ways of taking care of each other. Go to outdoor events (or mask up for indoor ones) to table and share pamphlets on collective COVID safety and harm reduction.

**12. Start a study group of fighting authoritarian governments from our past and in other countries and find inspiration in those stories**—and then act on them. Join in keeping a watch out for vigilante and police actions, or start a watch in your neighborhood or city. Prepare ahead of time for community self-

defense, which can come in many shapes and sizes.

**13. If you care for a child or children,** work with one or many other caregivers to create a mutual aid group if there isn't one already! Distribute multilingual flyers at pickup and drop-off spots for school, day care, or local playgrounds in order to find other caregivers to involve. Plan weekly or biweekly meetups at whatever space kids usually hang out (such as a park), and share needs and resources.

**14. Revive the mutual aid funds/networks that used to keep immigrant neighbors afloat** and supported after they arrived in America. Borrow from your own ancestral traditions/histories of mutual aid to build real-life communities by strengthening relations with your neighbors and friends for the days and years to come.

**15. Take time to mourn your losses and grieve your dead**—as inseparable from fighting and organizing for the living; as part and parcel of mending the world and ourselves. Set up temporary and ongoing public altars. Paint murals to honor lost friends and comrades. Lean on the deep wisdom of grief rituals that have sustained life for millennia. Make rituals part of

your resistance, self-organizing them with others. Take those rituals out into your community—by a river, on a street corner, at a DIY space or bookfair, during a protest or community defense action.

**16. Feed people for free.** Look for a *Food Not Bombs* or *Coffee Not Cops* chapter or similar mutual aid project near you, get in touch, and join in collecting ingredients for, cooking, and/or serving a meal. If there's nothing in your area, organize a free picnic; put up posters and encourage everybody to come—and optionally, bring a dish. Talking to the people you share the food with is important; do this if you can. Notice the moment when someone comes to understand that food can be good and free and shared without restrictions, obligations, eligibility criteria, or expectations; this means that things don't have to be the way they are.

**17. If a friend or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts** and reaches out to you, offer to drop everything and be present with them. Small acts of peer support can make an enormous difference; think of yourself as a “tourniquet” for them when they most need it. You can hold space for them, for instance; don't

make it about you or act scared but instead simply allow them to share feelings, especially without fear of the cops being called. Or keep them company and help look after their basic needs that day. Or let friends and other people you trust know in advance that they can call you in these kinds of situations, and that you'll take a weapon away from them for as long as needed if they ask.

**18. Organize a stoop or porch sale** with a few other households, or even a regular stoop or porch sale, and use the funds to cover material needs for mutual need efforts, such as abortion or bail funds, or for gender-affirming surgery or aiding folks during a rent strike. Ask yourself: *What time and materials could I easily donate that would have a bigger impact and allow me to meet and organize with friends and neighbors in my community?* Rather than a personal responsibility or charity, fundraising becomes a way of building deeper networks of care and connection.

**19. Engage in play with others as a gateway to imagining other worlds** and experimenting with getting there while cultivating camaraderie and goodwill. Hold game nights. Invent your own

versions of group “sports” such as capture the flag, tag, and soccer, and gather folks in a park to make riotously merry. Self-organize DIY theatrics, and simply be silly (and/or use your performances to make fun of the social order and dream up ways it might tumble). Add playfulness to your banners, events, organizing, and actions.

**20. Slow down.** Heed this wisdom: days and hours of rest are sacred. Heed disabled wisdom: your work is completely irrelevant to your worth! Your ancestors began weaving unfucked social fabrics and burning down fucked-up governments before you were a glimmer in their eye. Our descendants will be weaving and unfucking and burning still. What can we even weave with only weak threads connecting us? Trust takes years. Any faster, and conflict rends our community fabric. So come fascism or liberation: weave slow, take sabbaticals, feast, and sing with your community down by the river.

A large portion of this text was copied from *“Don’t Just Do Nothing: 20 Things You Can Do to Counter Fascism”* published on ItsGoingDown.org and was written as a communal effort, with advice gleaned from Jewish anarchists. It was posted January 2025 and offered freely to distribute. We were inspired by the creators’ unique voices and words and encourage readers to view the original version.

We have created a non-denominational, secular version for ourselves with the goal of reaching a broad range of people who are in need of mutual aid and community.

Source: <https://itsgoingdown.org/dont-just-do-nothing-20-things-you-can-do-to-counter-fascism/>

